1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3



old China, is treated with a greater deference, based not on fear, but on that admiration for learning which is so deeply rooted in Chinese cultural tradition.

There can be no doubt that this attitude has been taken over by the Min Chia from their Chinese neighbours and rulers. It is perhaps reinforced among them by the fact that learning, which means Chinese learning, involves the study of a foreign language and thus sharpens the distinction between the literate and the unlettered. Min Chia who have passed through the Middle School have in the process become a distinct group, to whom Chinese is as familiar as their own language, sharing interests and experiences which their less educated relatives do not understand and cannot appreciate. The school has become for them a new kind of greater family, for just as Chinese tradition accords to the teacher the respect due to a father, not merely in school, but in society generally, so schoolmates feel towards each other the intimacy, if not always the affection, otherwise reserved for kinsmen. Friendship between young men largely compensates for the absence of free social intercourse between the sexes, and such friendships are almost always based either on kinship or on fellowship at school.

It is still customary in Min Chia families for the married sons to remain in the paternal home, at least during the lifetime of the parents, and consequently a Min Chia home is usually fully occupied with numerous children, unmarried daughters, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and other relatives. In a culture where Ancestor Worship plays a major rôle it is natural that the bearing of children, especially sons, should be considered the first duty of women, and the principal object of marriage. No Min Chia marriage is arranged by the free choice of the bride and groom, except in the irregular elopements discussed earlier, and consequently affection and companionship, though these

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3



may happily come after marriage, are not pre-determining reasons for a marriage. The wealthier families, moving with the times, are beginning to realise that education for girls is not a mere waste of money, or a whim of some old scholar to be indulged in favour of a favourite granddaughter, as was once the case. To-day a young man of good family expects that his wife shall be able to read and write and have some general education. Nevertheless the duty of a wife is still to bear children, keep the home, and perhaps help to run the shop. She may have her women friends, usually drawn from relatives and in-laws, but there is little social life shared by husband and wife. He goes out to see his friends alone, or entertains them in his own home without his wife being present, although among the more advanced families he may present her to the guests before the meal.

A newly married bride has little independence in her husband's home, for it is controlled by her mother-in-law, or if she be already dead, by a sister-in-law senior to herself, or some other female relative of her husband's family. Her happiness will depend on the character of these women, for her husband has little to say in the home, and if she is disliked by his mother, he can do nothing to alleviate her lot. The best and most certain way of obtaining consideration is to give birth to a son, and if the child lives her position in the home is assured. Unfortunately the infant mortality in a country where medical knowledge is slight and the services of a skilled doctor unobtainable, is naturally very high. So much is this the case that no Min Chia will celebrate the birth of a child until it has lived at least a month, and it is not given a name until it has survived a year. Then indeed the family begin to feel that they have really got a new member, and the important question of the name is decided.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3



It would seem inevitable that not all such marriages can be a success. Husband and wife are complete strangers up to the moment of marriage, and the early, indeed immediate, consummation of the sexual union precludes any possibility of the growth of mutual attraction and of the courtship which western psychology considers an indispensable preliminary to sexual intercourse. It may be, indeed it often happens, that Chinese or Min Chia marriages become a real union of affection as time passes, but this can only be after the marriage has been consummated and depends on chance rather than choice. It is not surprising therefore to find that both young men and girls really dread their marriage as a plunge into the unknown, and that among the younger, more educated generation, there is an increasing opposition to the old custom, inspired by the spreading knowledge that the modern generation of university educated young people in the great cities have largely broken away from these restraints.

In the case, not by any means rare, where a mutual antipathy rather than attraction follows marriage, there is little remedy for either party in the traditional system. A wife can in theory leave a cruel or depraved husband and return to her father's home. Such action would cause the greatest possible scandal, and lead to bitter hostility between the two families, and it only natural to find that few fathers have sufficient appreciation of their daughter's unhappiness as to encourage them to abandon their husbands, especially as there is then little prospect of them being married a second time. A husband may divorce his wife for adultery, by simply sending her home, but this also rarely happens, as it is not often easy to prove the fact to the satisfaction of the wife's father, and it is held to reflect scandal on the family of a husband where such things happen, and are admitted to happen. If the husband finds his wife incompatible, but

5:Graham E-5 (1933, 1941)1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3
Ch'iang



refusal is not expected, and approval is not asked. A primary consideration is the value of the girl or woman as a worker to the family of the groom. For this reason wives are often older than their husbands. The writer heard of one boy who at twelve was married to a woman of twenty-six. She was a fine worker. To carry through an engagement and a marriage generally costs over a thousand dollars, and often the groom's family has to borrow. Naturally every man wants a wife and every woman wants a husband, so every person gets married sooner or later.

In 1933 the writer was told that the custom near Tung Men Wai and Mu Shang Chai was that the groom s family should give the family of the bride a pig s head, a couple of small jugs of wine, some pork, shoes, stockings, etc. At Ts'a To in 1941 he was told that the gift to the bride s parents should be a piece of pork, three jugs of about thirty-five catties of wine, two large pieces of white bread, incense, candles, etc At Ta Ho P'in Chai near Wen Ch'uan he was told that the groom's family should give eight rolls of cloth, black or blue but not white, twenty-four catties of pork two large wheat biscuits, three jars of wine, one large wheat cake called in Chinese a Ko kw'ei, one pair of earrings, ten feet of brass wire, and one pair of puttees. There is variation in the different localities and the objects, the amount, and the value varies with every family according to the ability of the groom's family to give

The horoscope is sometimes but not always used If it indicates that the marriage would be unlucky, the engagement is not consummated,

3. Marriage.

A lucky day is chosen for the wedding. Near Mu Shang Chai and Lung Ch'i Chai in 1933 the writer was told that sometimes the "flowery chair" or bridal sedan chair was used to take the bride to the groom's home, but if not she rode a horse, that on arrival two persons helped the bride out of the chair into the house, and that the bride and the groom kowtowed to the housegod, to the go-betweens, and to the friends.

At Ta Ho P'in Chai in 1941 it was stated that the bride rides in a sedan chair ( not in a "flowery" or decorated sedan chair as formerly), escorted by her brothers and sisters but not by her

Mewu

The marriage age as a rule is between the 15th and 18th year. 581 792
There is considerable sexual intercourse before marriage, but a couple marries when a child is born. There are love matches and matches arranged by a third person who even in the case of marriage for love, is sent by the young man to the family of his beloved. If there is only one son, he becomes a lama, if there are two sons, the older one stays at home and the younger becomes a lama; often all the sons except the first-born enter a lamasery. It even happens that all the sons join a lamasery. In that case, or if there is no son, a son-in-law must be adopted. These sons-in-law are as a rule ex-lamas who did not like the life of the lamasery. Thus there is /70/ always a shortage of eligible males, and yet there are no older unmarried women. Polygyny is uncommon, except among very wealthy people. Polyandry which occurs in parts of Tibet is not customary among the Mewu-Fantzu. The sons who become lamas are sent into the lamasery when they are 8 to 10 years old.

Among the Mewu-Fantzu the tent nomads and the sedentary 563
Fantzu intermarry. It is, however, said to be more distinctive for 581
a tent nomad to marry a woman from a resident family. (1) She likes

1. This statement of my interpreter contradicts what Ekvall 4), page 76, says, namely, that the nomads are always more highly esteemed than the sedentary Fantzu.

to go into a tent, provided her husband has means. Conversely a sedentary Fantzu can marry a nomad woman without being discredited. There are also marriagesbetween Chinese and Mohammedans on the one hand and nomads on the other. A Chinese or a Mohammedan may marry a nomad woman, but a man who is a nomad may not marry a Chinese woman because she does not understand the work a nomad woman has to perform. A family of nomads gains in social standing if a Chinese man marries a woman of the family. Hence the nomads do not always demand a marriage fee from the Chinese, at any rate not a large one. Usually the Chinese man is obliged to give only a yak. The Mongols living in the province of Kansu have no contact with the Mewu-Fantzu.

If it is a love match, neither the parents nor other relatives have 583
any influence in the choice of a man. The wedding gift is paid in yaks, and consists of one to five yaks, depending on the wealth of the man's family. If a son-in-law is adopted, the family of the girl must give the family of the man one or two yaks, provided the son does not come from a family living away, in which case nothing